

Trade

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3. Hearing Officer

The Hearing Officer is an independent office that ensures that the European Commission applies good administrative practice when implementing EU legislation concerning international trade.

Trade topics

Trade defence

The Hearing Officer ensures that interested parties affected by procedures or measures under EU legislation concerning international trade can effectively exercise their procedural rights, such as the right to be heard.

Please see the Terms of Reference of the Hearing Officer for further details.

What are trade proceedings?

The European Commission is responsible for implementing EU legislation on international trade. It also investigates unfair practices in international trade that affect EU businesses and consumers, and dramatic shifts in trade flows into or out of the EU. The administrative procedures it follows and the measures it applies when carrying out these tasks are called ‘trade proceedings’.

Trade proceedings include (inter alia) procedures or practices relating to:

- anti-dumping measures;
- anti-subsidy measures;
- safeguards;
- trade barriers;
- the EU’s Generalised Scheme of Preferences;
- ensuring fair pricing of vessels;
- ensuring fair competition in air services, and;
- implementing rulings of the World Trade Organisation and the European Court of Justice.

Who can call upon the Hearing Officer?

The Hearing Officer may be called upon by any interested party whose interests are affected by a trade proceeding, EU Member States, other Commission services, and the authorities of any non-EU country concerned.

The Hearing Officer decides whether her/his involvement is justified, considering the time constraints of the proceeding and the deadlines applied under EU Regulations.

Interested parties are natural or legal persons directly involved in trade proceedings:

- EU industry;
- Exporting producers in countries outside the EU;
- EU importers;
- Governments of countries outside the EU;
- Consumer organisations, *only* if there is an objective link between their activities and the product concerned by the proceeding, and;
- Trade unions.

Who cannot call upon the Hearing Officer?

- Academics;
- students, or;
- journalists.

What are your rights as an interested party?

1. Right to be heard

In writing:

- Right to submit evidence
- Right to comment

Orally:

Hearings: an opportunity to be heard

If you are an interested party, a hearing gives you the opportunity to explain aspects of an investigation that affected your rights of defence and/or to ask for clarification and further examination of a particularly complex issue in a trade proceeding.

2. Right to equal treatment (non-discrimination)

3. Right to access the file concerning a trade proceeding

4. Respect of confidentiality (protection of professional/business secrets)

5. Right to review non-confidential summaries of confidential information and to access confidential information non-susceptible to summary

6. Extension of deadlines

7. Right to be informed of the main arguments based on which the Commission decides (disclosures)

For further details, please see the latest Annual Report and the publication *The Hearing Officer in Trade Proceedings*.

Contact the Hearing Officer's team

By email: Trade-Hearing-Officer@ec.europa.eu

By phone: + 32 2 295 52 83

Latest news

- News article
- 28 November 2023

European Commission acts to protect EU industry from PET plastic dumping

The Commission has imposed provisional anti-dumping duties on imports of certain polyethylene terephthalate ('PET') plastic products from China, defending EU companies and more than 1,500 jobs. The EU market of PET has a value of over €5.5 billion.

- Press release
- 4 October 2023

Commission launches investigation on subsidised electric cars from China

The European Commission has formally launched today an anti-subsidy investigation into the imports of battery electric vehicles (BEV) from China.

- Press release
- 6 September 2023

EU's Trade Defence in 2022: defending EU industry and protecting jobs

The 2022 report on the EU's trade defence activities, adopted today, shows that the European Commission has continued to be active and assertive in defending EU producers against unfair trade practices in 2022 by robustly applying the legislation and ensuring that measures are effective.

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Latest events

[See all](#)